

**COMPETITIVE AMPLIFICATION OF FRACTIONATED TARGETS FROM  
MULTIPLE NUCLEIC ACID SAMPLES**

**ABSTRACT**

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Disclosed are methods that allow one or more targets to be compared across two or more nucleic acid populations. The methods rely on first mixing sample populations that are being compared. The sample mixture is then divided into target fractions using hybridization to polynucleotides or oligonucleotides that can be separated from the sample mixture. The target  
10 fraction(s) are independently amplified such that the targets from each sample compete for amplification reagents. The amplification products are quantified in a manner that differentiates the sample from which a particular amplification product arose. The relative abundance of amplification products descended from each sample population reflects the level of target present in each of the original samples, providing a direct comparison of the abundance of the target  
15 sequences in the samples being characterized.